

people even clutched my clothing, and hands  
 were raised  
 to heaven to implore blessings on me if I  
 would attend  
 to them.

The whole village of Kalahoma was out,  
 thronging,  
 pressing, and almost suffocating me, and the  
 Khan's serv-  
 ants who came to meet me did not or  
 could not dis-  
 perse the people, though every man holds his  
 life at the  
 Khan's disposal. These villages, which are  
 surrounded  
 by opium fields, are composed of the rudest of  
 human  
 habitations, built of rough stones, the walls  
 being only  
 five feet high. There is much subterranean  
 room for  
 cattle. The stacks of such winter fodder as  
 celery and  
*Centaurea alata*, and those of *kizijcs* for fuel,  
 are larger  
 than the dwellings. The latter are of conical  
 form, and  
 many of them are built on the house roofs.

Taimur Khan's fort and *serai* are in the  
 midst of all  
 this, and are very poor and ruinous, but the  
 walls are  
 high, and they have a *lalakhana*. As I  
 approached the  
 ladies came out to meet me, veiled in  
 white cotton  
*chadars*. The principal wife took my hand  
 and led me  
 through a hole in the wall, not to be called  
 a doorway,  
 into a courtyard littered with offal and piled  
 with stacked  
 animal fuel, and up some high dilapidated  
 steps, into a  
 small dark room, outside of which are a very  
 small "lobby"  
 and a blackened ladder against the wall,  
 leading to the  
 roof, on which the ladies sleep in the hot  
 weather. Some  
 poor rugs covered the floor, and there were  
 besides some  
 poor cotton-covered bolsters. Everything,

even the dress  
of the ladies, indicated poverty. The dark  
hot room  
was immediately packed with a crowd of  
women, children,  
and babies, all appallingly dirty. It was a  
relief when  
the Khan was announced in the distance, and  
they cleared  
out like frightened sheep, leaving only the  
four wives,  
who stood up at his approach, and remained  
standing till  
he was seated.